

HIGHER EDUCATION: ANSWERS TO FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Are Entering Freshmen Prepared For College-Level Work?



The California State University (CSU) and the University of California (UC) evaluate newly admitted students to determine whether they are prepared for college-level courses. Students who do not demonstrate proficiency must pass the appropriate precollegiate (commonly known as “remedial” education) courses.

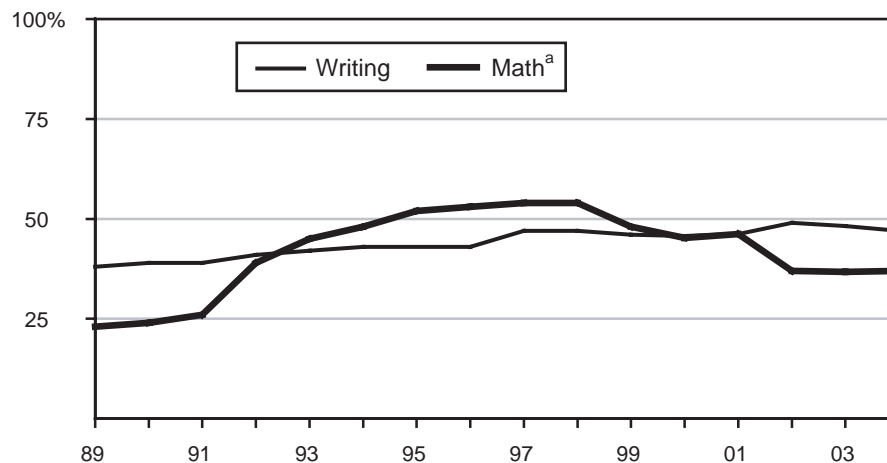


The CSU currently admits many students who are unprepared for college-level writing and math.

- Of regularly admitted CSU freshmen (those meeting the system’s eligibility requirements), almost half are unprepared for college-level writing and over one-third are unprepared for college-level math.
- At nine CSU campuses, at least two-thirds of regularly admitted freshmen arrived unprepared for college-level work. At CSU Dominguez Hills, over 80 percent of regularly admitted freshmen are unprepared for college-level work.

Many CSU Students Continue to Arrive Unprepared For College-Level Work

Regularly Admitted Freshmen Needing Remediation



^aThe CSU made the math exam more difficult in 1992, and allowed students to use calculators in 1999. The CSU modified the math exam again in 2001.



Unpreparedness rates of freshmen at UC have remained relatively steady over time.

- At UC, about one-third of regularly admitted freshmen arrive unprepared for college-level writing.
- The percentage of freshmen needing remediation varies considerably across UC campuses. In fall 2003, the unpreparedness rates ranged from a low of 14 percent at UC Los Angeles to a high of 55 percent at UC Riverside.



The state currently funds precollegiate instruction at CSU, UC, and the California Community Colleges (CCC) at quite different levels. Specifically, the *2004-05 Budget Act* provides:

- About \$3,950 to CCC per full-time equivalent (FTE) student for most precollegiate courses.
- \$5,662 to CSU per additional FTE student for all credit courses regardless of whether they are precollegiate or not.
- No state funding for precollegiate courses offered by UC.



Beginning in 2004, CSU has sought to reduce the need for remediation through its Early Assessment Program (EAP).

- Under EAP, selected questions are included on the California Standards Test administered to eleventh grade students to determine proficiency in college-level work.
- The CSU also provides academic support, teacher professional development, and other resources to help schools prepare students to meet proficiency standards.
- Supplementary budget language directs CSU to provide an evaluation of EAP to the Legislature by December 2005.